

Thursday, February 14, 2013



Grow-op busted in Stevensville

Police find 40 marijuana plants

18



Player of the week

Alex Drulia honoured by Midwest Junior League

31



New high school being proposed

get it online
www.fortierietimes.com

Students lend helping hand



KRIS DUBÉ Fort Erie Times

Niagara College students Rebecca Muscat and Theodore Bigugu having a friendly game of cards with Head Injury Association of Fort Erie member Mike McClary. Read the whole story on page five.

See Page 2

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Olive branch extended

➤ Steckley makes recommendation for council to start getting along

Kris Dubé
The Times

Council has officially decided to attempt getting along as a collective unit.

At Monday's meeting, an olive branch was extended by Ward 3 Coun. Bob Steckley, through a recommendation passed unanimously.

In summary, it says that all council members will no longer insult one another in a public forum and through the media.

"No one says we have to be best friends, or agree on every issue," said Steckley.

He feels council should make a much stronger attempt to remain professional and mature while in the public spotlight.

"As elected politicians, we're held to a higher standard and I believe it's time we all start to live up to this standard," said Steckley.

If council does abide by this through the honour system, he hopes it can "rebuild the image of Fort Erie."

Some councillors reluctant to think negativity will end

From Page 1

Ward 4 Coun. John Hill said that since this term of council began, the public has had a poor perception of what takes place in the council chambers.

"It's been two years of what would appear to be discourse," said Hill.

He said attacking one another at public events, at council meetings or in the media serves no purpose and sheds a dim light on the community.

"What we have to be doing and what we are charged with the responsibility of doing is serving the residents of Fort Erie."

Ward 2 Coun. Rick Shular congratulated Steckley for his recommendation, showing support for it.

But in his opinion, council will only start to operate more effectively as a unified group if there is more disclosure of what some councillors' intentions are on important decisions.

"In my opinion, there are too many hidden agendas," said Shular.

Ward 6 Coun. Paul Collard pictured being a local politician in a community he cares deeply about to be a lot different, before he was elected for a first term in October 2010.

"It wasn't supposed to be like this," said Collard.

He supported the recommendation through his vote, but is wary it has "no teeth" and cautioned that criticism from his colleagues on council and in the public realm will never



To say we must all get along is a massive understatement."

— Ward 6 Coun.
Paul Collard

end.

"That's my biggest fear, it's been like this for two years," said Collard.

"To say we must all get along is a massive understatement," he added.

Ward 1 Coun. Stephen Passero referred to the operational review, that council spent slightly over \$91,000 on last year.

"It told us the biggest problem we have in Fort Erie is us," said Passero.

In the Feb. 2 edition of the Fort Erie Times, councillors Collard, Lubberts, Hill and Steckley authored a letter, reassuring their support for the Canadian Motor Speedway project.

Passero said that if the suggestion that there is a 4-3 divide on council, submitting a letter without all seven councillors' names on it, was not a way to convey that message.

"I could see how some people could get that impression," said Passero.

Ward 5 Coun. Don Lubberts is not optimistic that the insults and innuendos on social media will

stop either.

"This is not something that is going to happen overnight," said Lubberts, pointing out that the two budgets this council has completed resulted in 4.1 and 4.3 per cent increases to the general levy.

"Sounds wonderful," said Mayor Doug Martin when he addressed the topic.

But signing up to become an elected official requires having to earn the support of your constituents and if people don't like what you have voted for, then they

are going to let you know, he said.

Martin also said it's one thing to say that the last two years of council have produced more positive than negative results, opposed to having evidence that supports that statement.

"It's the actions taken by this council that have spoken a lot louder than those words," said Martin.

The mayor voted in favour of the recommendation and said he hopes to see a noticeable change around the table.

Diving into a donation



KRIS DUBÉ Fort Erie Times

Fort Erie Underwater Recovery Unit members Larry Mathewson, Jim Traves, John Gilmour, Bill Chipp and Ryan Fazekas stopped by Community Outreach Program Erie (COPE) on Monday, to donate one hundred dollars and a collection of food, raised at their group's annual River Drift, held in January. Accepting the contribution from COPE, a food bank on Dufferin Street, is Mandy Crosby.



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New high school being proposed to board

Kris Dubé
Editor

It's possible that a brand-new local high school will be built in the near future.

At an Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) meeting last week, the Town of Fort Erie proposed its idea to close both Port Erie Secondary School (FESS) and Ridgeway-Crystal Beach High School (RCBHS).

This would result in the construction of a new facility within the Municipal Centre, adjacent to Town Hall, the Leisureplex and the YMCA.

The idea was pitched last week by Ward 4 Coun. John Hill and Ward 1 Coun. Stephen Passero, who represent the areas where FESS and RCBHS sit today.

The ARC committee began its deliberations last year, addressing the fact that both local high schools, along with Port Colborne High School are aging facilities that are too large for the current student population.

"We want to have a fit that's going to be beneficial for Fort Erie," said Hill.

Both FESS and RCBHS currently have a high population of students who arrive to classes by bus or live out of boundary.

Over 53 per cent of the student body at FESS fits into this category and 76

per cent do from RCBHS.

Hill said a new facility in this location would address the length of time students take to arrive.

"We want to limit the amount of time a student is in transit to school," said Hill.

Passero said this isn't a political issue and hopes it is embraced and welcomed by the community.

Port Colborne High School is no longer part of the same plan and will be considered during a future ARC process.

"It doesn't pit municipality versus municipality. That doesn't help anybody," said Passero.

He referred to it as a local solution and although the new school would need to be approved by the District School Board of Niagara, it's important to get the ball rolling.

"We want to start the conversation now and get a unified front amongst the community."

At the meeting last week, Passero said the committee heard concern and optimism for the direction proposed by the municipality.

"You heard emotion come from the meeting, but the other thing you heard is optimism for a bright future and a new facility," he said.

About 80 parents and students gathered at RCBHS for the meeting.

In the end, Passero said, it seemed most in attendance agreed the accommodation review and the potential closure of two historic high schools is a tough decision, but necessary.

"They recognize each school is lacking in some areas."

Hill said a new school will see a large benefit from the YMCA, Ferndale Park, Town Hall and the Leisureplex being so close.

"It can leverage all the amenities that would surround it," he said.

"It's an opportunity for the community to come together on a common project."

The proposed location would require acquisition of private lands and acting chief administrative officer Ron Tripp said dialogue has already begun and support is there for the property's owner.

Mayor Doug Martin, a proud RCBHS Blue Devil alum, said now is not the time for critics of the project to stroll down memory lane and use their time spent at either school many years ago as a reason why this project should not happen.

"Times have changed. It's not about who went to the school in the past...this is about what is going to happen for the students in the system now," said Martin.



KRIS DUBÉ Fort Erie Times

Councillors John Hill, Stephen Passero and Mayor Doug Martin with an artist's rendering of a proposed new high school for Fort Erie.

Breakfast with Rob Nicholson, M.P.



Saturday, March 2, 2013
Breakfast 9:00am

Members in good standing:
The ACM will directly follow the breakfast as well as the Delegate Selection meeting for the National Convention, June 17th - 29th in Calgary Alberta.

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Fort Erie Mayor Doug Martin at a recent event.

Martin wants to dissolve ward system

Kris Dubé
Editor

Mayor Doug Martin received enough votes on Monday night, for council to begin considering a dissolution of Greater Fort Erie's six wards and a general

vote in the next municipal election.

The motion made by the mayor, directed the Town's clerk to prepare a report on future implications the move would have.

Plenty of public consultation would be needed for the process to move forward.

"We would have a unified municipality," said Martin.

There is nothing in the Municipal Act that says a councillor has to reside in the area he represents, so Martin feels there is no reason why constituents shouldn't have a say in who runs the entire municipality.

"So when you say you were elected by the people, you were elected by all the people."

If council does



So when you say you were elected by the people, you were elected by all the people."

— Mayor Doug Martin

He was front row and centre for a large issue impacting the area and he wonders if having representation from all over the community and not specifically in each ward, is the right way to go.

He also asked if the report could address the amount of mileage council members are compensated for ministerially.

In 1981, a by-law came before council to make the same move and it was approved. It was then appealed by two council members who were victorious and the wards were not dissolved.

Greater Fort Erie has operated on a six-ward system since 1970.



We are prepared and feel positive about the outcome"

— Azhar Mohammad

Speedway appeal to be heard in March

The Ontario Municipal Board will hear an appeal of its decision on the Canadian Motor Speedway March 21.

Earlier this week, it was determined the hearing would be held in Toronto on March 11 but that date had changed due to availability issues, according to the speedway's executive director Azhar Mohammad.

"We are prepared and feel positive about the outcome," said Mohammad.

The Preservation of Agricultural Lands Society is challenging the OMB's



An artist's rendition of the Canadian Motor Speedway.

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Head Injury Association grateful for students' roles

Kris Dubé
Editor

Staff at the Head Injury Association of Fort Erie (HIAFE) are grateful for the hard work and dedication the agency receives from college students that complete their co-op placements at the local agency.

There are four Niagara College students helping out at the HIAFE this academic term and program director Donna Summerville says they provide an incredible amount of help.

"We get a lot of exceptional students and I know they really enjoy their placement here," she said.

She said students who are placed at the local agency are usually very enthusiastic about their role because they know their help is appreciated and it prepares them for a future in a similar field.

"It gives them great experience and we can always count on them when we need to," said Summerville.

She said the students are often encouraged to take the reins with programming, under staff supervision, and new ideas are welcomed by the agency.

"We let them work on their own a lot too."

Rebecca Muscat is enrolled in the educational assistant and special needs program at Niagara College and is more than glad to be helping out at the HIAFE. "I'm getting a lot of valuable work experience," said Muscat.

"I'm becoming friends with a lot of the members too."

Theodore Bigugu is a student in Niagara College's social service worker program, in the early stages of pursuing a second career.

Before moving to Fort Erie

I love to help. It's one of my favourite things to do.

— Theodore Bigugu

He officially became a Canadian citizen last month.

"I love to help, it's one of my favourite things to do," he said.

Since starting his placement at the HIAFE, he has

encountered nothing but great people who want to work toward the same goal.

"This is the right place for me...we share a lot of ideas with one another," said Bigugu.

On Sat. Feb. 23, the HIAFE will be holding a garage sale fundraiser and are asking the community to donate gently-used items for the event.

Donations can be arranged by calling (905) 871-7789.

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opinion page

Fort Erie Times

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our editorial

Now is the time to start dialogue

A brand new high school in the middle of Fort Erie?

Sounds like a great idea, to us.

The Town of Fort Erie has proposed the closure of Fort Erie Secondary School and Ridgeway-Crystal Beach High School and of course this will be a tough pill for some to swallow.

But what has to be realized is that now is not the time to dwell on the past and remember the great times had back in the 1970s as a student.

Right now is the time to address the problems being faced within the public school board, which is aging and underused facilities.

This could be the start of a new era, something new that the community can be proud of.

Ward 4 Coun. John Hill nailed it on the head in his comments printed in this week's related story, saying that moving ahead with a new school in Greater Fort Erie can be a project that will bring everyone together.

No political posturing, no divisiveness... this is what the process will involve.

It's still very far from becoming a reality, but as Ward 1 Coun. Stephen Passero said in the same story, now is the time to start the dialogue and get the ball rolling.

-Kris Dubé

Continue the surge of back and forth criticism that has taken place recently in the media and in public forums.

This doesn't surprise me because although Steckley has been a part of some decisions that I have personally criticized in my weekly column, I've always known that he cares about this community and would never intentionally jeopardize its well-being.

Taking the high road and setting an example for all of council to abide by is something I feel Steckley is fully capable of and will do his best to honour.

Although there was some reluctance from fellow council members about whether or not is recommendation will hold any water, I hope everyone can see the grand picture here and realize that bickering and name-calling has no benefit whatsoever for this town and appearing to be a more unified collective will help.

An olive branch is exactly what this town needs.

At Monday's council meeting, Ward 3 Coun. Bob Steckley extended an offer to his colleagues to discon-



Do You Remember?

Well, so far we have heard that last week's photo of the man with the broom in the snowstorm was taken either on Ridge Road in Ridgeway, the top of Derby Road near Wellington in Crystal Beach, or either Concession or Douglas St. in Fort Erie. Please weigh in on which location you think it is as well as this man's name.

We were glad to hear from Debbie (York) Horne, Ken Seebach and Sandra Williams about the previous week's photo. These children were the public speaking contest winners at Mather School in 1972.

In the photo from the left, unknown (possibly Earl Campbell), Debra York and Franklin Williams (Sandra's son). Frank won for grade 5 son.

and Debbie won first prize in Grade 6 for her speech about "My Dog Buttons".

She can still remember most of her speech!

Did you and your sweet heart dance to the music of this band? If you recognize this drummer, please call the Museum and tell us the details. Our phone number is 894-5322 or e-mail us at museum@forterie.on.ca.

Extending olive branch a great way to turn things around



Kris Dubé
Editor's Notebok

An olive branch is exactly what this town needs.

At Monday's council meeting, Ward 3 Coun. Bob Steckley extended an offer to his colleagues to discon-

gratulated for being the first to put himself on the line and addressing this ongoing problem. I don't think his recommendation will have much of an impact on Internet critics because quite frankly, it's what gets them out of bed most mornings.

But at the same time, council members have to realize that being criticized is something they sign up for when running for office.

It comes with the territory.

Although the individuals who post on blogs and other mediums have that

right in a free world, there are comments about the personal lives of some members that I don't feel are necessary.

But at the same time, council members have to realize that being criticized is something they sign up for when running for office.

It comes with the territory.

That's a massive part of being a politician, at any level.

Steckley should be con-

gratulated for being the first to put himself on the line and addressing this ongoing problem. I don't think his recommendation will have much of an impact on Internet critics because quite frankly, it's what gets them out of bed most mornings.

But I do think it will will a new effort around the horseshoe to be more productive and spend less time arguing.

kris.dube@sunmedia.ca

opinion page

Reader says council has plenty of direction

Dear Editor,

As I read our local media, I find it disturbing how the reporting of council always has various negative spins. In addition, negative editorials seem to be sent by the same people which some press people seem to support continually. One would surmise there may be an agenda afoot to discredit four, forward thinking councillors.

The constant negativity and councillor bashing seems to be a clear indicator that the media, opinionated authors, and the Mayor's contingents have been told they should be fearful of change. Change that is much needed to make Fort Erie viable for the future.

Change is not bad—but can be difficult.

Many corporations embrace change to survive hard times. Those fearful of

change, often belittle people who are catalysts for change and in this case, the erroneously targeted "four." Negative people refuse to embrace the change that is badly needed to move this community forward. It seems that if one does not agree with the mayor, they are branded as rebels. Dictatorial or Democrazy?

You decide.

Fortunately, council has shown that it has a willingness to stand up to convention, and to think and look outside the box. This thinking has resulted for the residents, the lowest Municipal Tax rate increase in six years. Considering the doldrums of the times we are facing, it is something that is much needed.

In 2010 the public over whelmingly elected several new councillors on the platform of the need for positive change, the status quo not

being acceptable. Despite this, there continues to be a bizarre fixation with "four" councillors.

Continued negative attacks on any councillor(s) will only serve to hurt the town's ability to attract needed industries and commerce to this area. Are these negative thinking residents and back room political pundits so blind as to not realize, that they are the hindrance to much needed business?

It's not the "four" councillors.

We need to rally around this community, not push it further into obscurity. I shall anxiously wait to see if these same people who think these "four" councillors have not done anything for this community, step up to the plate in 2014.

*Rick Elston
Ridgeview*

'It won't be long before everyone relocates to somewhere less embarrassing'

Dear Editor,

What is wrong with all of you?

The infamous "four" seem to have a private agenda and are not working in the best interests of all the residents of the town.

They are childish and it is hard to believe that they are even capable of running their own households, let alone governing a town. They have done nothing but make the town look foolish.

However, having said that, the Mayor has now fallen prey to their non-sense.

The Mayor is supposed to be the leader and, obviously, because of all of the crap from the "four" he is unable to do that any longer.

You are all making the town a laughing stock – in the region and probably now in the province.

I do not know Mr. Thibert, but I think the town needs some straight talk.

With the recent lease concessions from the

Snow day



Ridgeview resident Tristan Jagiello spent last Friday with his family, building a snowman in their backyard.

Mayor and council were elected to provide leadership

Dear Editor,

As a long-term resident of Fort Erie, I am concerned about the future of our com-



If they had any sense of honour, they would all resign and let grown-ups take the reins of leadership."

you are destroying any credibility this town may have left. Perhaps if you can't work together to attempt to help the town recover, you should all resign. We couldn't look any more foolish.

If you all are so intent on us closing the doors on our town then just continue in your present mode. It won't be long before everyone relocates to somewhere less embarrassing.

*Susan Hesser
Fort Erie*

whose main objectives seem to have become a constant battle of egos and 'oneupmanship.'

If they had any sense of honour, they would all resign and let grown ups take the reins of leadership.

It is obvious that their sense of self-importance will prevent them from doing such a thing.

The only way to save our community is for someone to start a grass-roots movement to have these people removed from office or failing that, to make sure none of them are re-elected.

If anyone is interested in forming such a movement, please contact the undersigned at (905) 894-5671 in order to start the process.

If we continue on the present course, then Fort Erie will become an economic ghost town that would be better named 'Fort Erie.'

*Michael K. Panton
Crystal Beach*

Region wants to cut down on smoking in public places

Melissa Mangelsen
Fort Erie Times

The Region wants to crack down on smoking in public places, including parks, playgrounds, sports fields, splash pads, bus shelters and beaches, and is asking for municipal support.

Gillian McDonald, Niagara Region's health promoter for chronic disease and injury prevention,

and Maria Brigantino, regional manager for chronic disease and injury prevention have been going around to municipalities explaining the proposed changes to the regional no-smoking bylaw.

The regional legislation would go beyond the provincial no-smoking act.

In a November Regional report, a call for smoke-free outdoor spaces was presented to Regional council. The report recommended a

regional bylaw to prohibit outdoor smoking on all regionally and municipally owned properties. The report and its recommendations were endorsed by Regional Council.

There are several benefits to smoke-free outdoor spaces, including safer and healthier communities, protection of residents from the harmful effects of second-hand smoke, providing a positive role modeling for youth and decreasing

the chances that youth will start smoke, councillors heard. The smoke-free legislation would also reduce litter and pollution from discarded cigarette butts, and would encourage smokers to quit or cut back.

"Smoking continues to be the Number 1 killer of people in Ontario," said McDonald.

Provincial legislation protects children by prohibiting smoking outdoors

on properties that contain day nurseries, elementary and high schools, but doesn't apply to high-use areas such as parks and playgrounds.

Provincial legislation specifies that smoking is not permitted anywhere on school property, is prohibited within nine metres of hospitals and long-term care facilities and on patios which have a roof or an overhang.

A survey conducted by the Niagara Region Public Health between May and June last year indicated overwhelming support for a move to toughen bylaws.

A total of 1,397 Niagara residents participated in the survey and included both smokers and non-smokers, the health department report says.

The key findings of the study were that 88 per cent

of Niagara residents support a bylaw restricting smoking in outdoor public settings. In addition 94 per cent of visitors to the Niagara region support a bylaw that restricts smoking in outdoor public settings.

Ninety per cent of Niagara residents support the Niagara Falls bylaw to some extent, which prohibits smoking in all city-owned parks, recreational facilities, bus shelters and entrances to city-owned buildings, and 85 per cent of Niagara residents agree that restricting smoking in outdoor settings is good for the health of their community.

Enforcement would be based on an educate, warn and enforce model.

See Page 9

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Recommended fine would be \$250

From Page 8

The educational phase would occur during the first year of implementation, followed by tickets issued in 2014.

The recommended fine for not complying with the bylaw is \$250 with applicable court fees, total payable fine being \$305. The proposed implementation date is May 31, 2013.

Currently there are five enforcement officers that cover 12 municipalities, but McDonald said Town bylaw officers would also have the authority to issue fines.

"Our hope is that people

will comply to the bylaw," she said.

Typically, they see a trend of "hot spots" where the bylaw is broken, but McDonald said as education increases they will see a decrease in the number of tickets being issued.

The next steps for the bylaw are consultation and engagement with municipalities, a draft bylaw, bringing it to regional council to seek majority vote and then the final bill would go to municipalities seeking the majority vote required to pass the bylaw.

A presentation will be heard by Fort Erie council on Feb. 25.

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Witness was reluctant to tell police what he knew and faced charges

Alison Langley
QMI Agency Niagara

A resident in a townhouse complex where Tyrone Johnston fell in a hail of bullets was initially reluctant to

speak with police because he didn't trust law enforcement and he was in fear for his family, court heard Monday.

"I come from an environment where we don't really trust the police," said

Nigerian-born Ike Ume. "Nigerian police are very corrupt. You don't hang around and you don't get involved."

When he refused to tell Niagara Regional Police everything he knew about

the matter, Ume said he was arrested and charged with obstruction of justice.

"I have never been in jail in my life," the 42-year-old said in Welland Superior Court. The charge was subse-

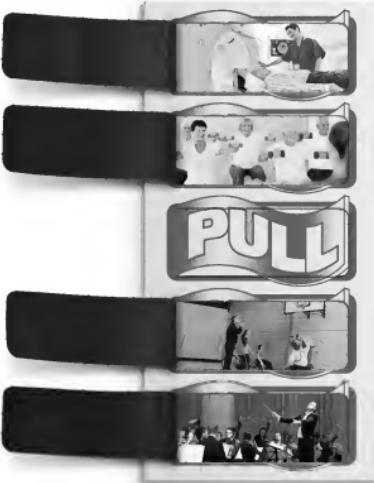
quently dismissed.

During his seven-day prison stay, court was told, the words "You're going to die," were carved into his front door.

"I didn't know who to trust," he said, adding he

believed Johnston was a member of a street gang. "I didn't care about myself but my family was my concern."

See page 11



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Witness wanted to protect his family

From page 10

Johnston, 32, died in October 2009 after being shot three times.

Robert Hope, 26, of Fort Erie, has pleaded guilty to first-degree murder and using a firearm to commit an indictable offence.

Court was told Ume and his wife hosted a birthday party at their unit on Oct. 4, 2009 to celebrate their daughter's third birthday.

Among the 30-plus guests were Johnston, who also lived at the same complex, and Hope, whose sister also lived in the complex.

He testified Johnston was under the influence of alcohol and angry at another guest at the party.

"Tyrone was making some comments that weren't nice ones," he told assistant Crown attorney Bob Maher.

"He was ranting, saying there were certain people who shouldn't be here. He said you can have bad people amongst good people."

He said Johnston left but returned a short time later and became involved in a verbal disagreement with Dorivaldo Decastro, who was dating Hope's sister at the time.

"Tyrone's voice was getting louder," he said. "I have no idea what he was upset about."

Ume said he was relieved when Johnston left the party.

"Every word you could say when you're mad came out of this guy's mouth."

"This is why you don't invite black people to your parties," said Ume, who is also black.

Ten minutes later, court heard, Ume was inside his house when he heard a child screaming.

He ran outside and saw a young girl, Johnston's girlfriend's younger sister, running towards his house.

"She was screaming and crying and saying, 'they shot him...they shot him!'"

He also spotted Decastro and Hope running from the complex.

Defence council Deborah Loft pointed to several inconsistencies between Ume's testimony and his original statement to police.

Ume said his initial statement to police was limited because he didn't really want to get involved in a murder investigation.

"I responded the best way I knew how to protect my family."

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Region's economic developer says manufacturing jobs are growing

Report was Region's first peek at economic development hopes

Jeff Bolichowski
OMI Agency Niagara

Niagara's manufacturing sector gained 3,600 jobs in 2012, Niagara Region's economic development director said Thursday as she laid out a two-year growth road map for regional council.

Diane Simsovic told councillors the job gains, recorded by Statistics

44

It really does represent what we hope to implement and what we want to implement in the next couple of years and what we really hope will get some results in a short period of time."

—Diane Simsouic

Canada between December 2011 and December 2012, represented part of about 21,000 jobs in Niagara's manufacturing sector. That slice of the economy will be one of four the Region is eyeing in its road map to

2015.

The draft report was council's first peek at where the Region's revamped economic development hopes to steer Niagara's economy.

"It really does represent

what we hope to implement and what we want to implement in the next couple of years, and what we really hope will get some results in a short period of time," Simcic told councillors.

Manufacturing was one of the hardest-hit sectors when the economy crashed in 2008. But Simsovic identified it as one of the strengths Niagara still has.

The Region, she said, will focus on manufacturing, agricultural business, tourism and logistics as it looks to bolster its economic strength. She outlined a series of steps taken by the new internal economic development agency, each with measurable perfor-

mance goals.
"We want to
magnet for ta-
tivity," she said.

She said the Region is also targeting a major floral event, Flora Niagara, for 2017.

- 3 -

That, she said, is part of an effort to bring globally significant big events here.

A floral event could have other events around it," she said.

Manufacturing is beginning to creep back into St. Catharines, said Mayor Brian McMullan.

"It is starting, particularly in some of the smaller manufacturers," he said. Some of the numbers, he said, could likely be attributed to

General Motors recalling workers to put together their new transmissions.

"We know it's not going to be the large manufacturers where the job growth is going to be," he said. "We know it's going to be in the small and medium-sized business."

He said that's not jobs on the scale of GM, but it also gives Niagara a more stable economic base.

Overall, he said, the report strikes a good tone, one he said he's satisfied with.

"Some could say there's probably not a lot new. At the same time, the approach is different," McMullan said. "It's refreshing."



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Police uncover small marijuana grow operation in Stevensville

Kris Dubé
Editor

The Niagara Regional Police (NRP) uncovered a marijuana grow operation in Stevensville last week.

About 40 plants in early stages of development were found at an address on Black Creek Road and district No. 5 staff sergeant Dave Hunter says no charges have been laid, because there is not enough evi-

dence to determine who is responsible for the operation.

"You still have to be able to prove ownership of what was in the basement," said Hunter.

POLICE say the owner of the home is not responsible for the marijuana plants that were found in a "seeding" stage, in the residential neighbourhood.

"That person hadn't been at the home for a while," said Hunter.

When police uncover marijuana growing operations and complete their investigation, other authorities such as the fire department are called in to take over.

Hydro, electrical and other utilities need to be examined for safety reasons. The property also needs to be flagged for potential future buyers or tenants.

"It has to be declared, that it was used as a mari-

juana grow-op," said Hunter.

On the front windows of the home, unsafe building and electrical safety orders have been posted.

The NRP is in the process of getting the region's 12 municipalities to become part of an agreement that would address the protocol taken after police bust grow operations.

A handful of municipalities such as Port Colborne, St. Catharines, Thorold and

Niagara-on-the-Lake have already signed on, but the Town of Fort Erie has not at this point.

Fort Erie's fire chief Larry Coplen said the agreement would not change anything and that the procedures written in the agreement are currently being followed locally.

"What's in the agreement, is a formalization of what we're already doing now," said Coplen.

He said that in cases of

grow operations, mold can be a problem that needs to be cleaned up and often property owners will think that covering it with a coat of paint is a remedy.

The fire department, along with the power company also needs to address specific electrical issues on the property.

"It's all safety issues we look for."

Coplen said a report on this issue will be brought to council in the near future.

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said. "It's a different type of three-on-three league that's relatively new to this area.

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situation, so it allows them to really improve on their skills."

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ISOLATED INSTANCES

Research clearly shows that hearing impairment leads to a host of negative outcomes as those with hearing loss needlessly struggle with their hearing impairment daily. Even though family, friends, and co-workers may perceive these individuals to come to terms with their problem, those affected from hearing loss often feel self-conscious or embarrassed to address the issue and may overcompensate for their hearing losses by pretending that they heard correctly, making up stories to reinforce what they heard, or simply ignoring what was said. In fact, denial leads to social isolation, withdrawal, and even depression. These feelings of isolation can be overcome with the use of hearing devices that are highly noticeable.

Studies have shown that the effects of hearing loss are cumulative. Just as muscles grow weak from lack of use, the brain loses its ability to process sounds and recognize speech without regular auditory stimulation. By the time you notice that your hearing has declined, it may already have already lost the full appreciation of sound. If you are one of the many people who have been told today that you have a hearing loss, don't despair. There is help available. Call HearAgain BALANCE & HEARING CLINICS at 905-671-4242. Our office is located at 600 Main Street, Unit 12. We are open 9-5, Mon-Fri. Most insurance plans are accepted. Please visit our website at www.hearagainclinics.com. P.S. Untreated hearing loss can lead to irritability, tension, stress, depression, social withdrawal, memory loss, difficulty learning new tasks, reduced coping skills, and reduced overall psychological health.

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St. Catharines 905-864-0100
Fort Erie 905-871-4242

Alivia's Rainbows



MIKE SANSONO Submitted photo

Hundreds of people gathered at the Leisureplex last year for a fundraiser that benefitted a local charity, Alivia's Rainbows. Read the whole story on page 23.

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Alivia's Rainbows invites community to annual event

Over \$33,000 raised last year for charity that supports Niagara families with sick children

Melissa Mangelsen
Fort Erie Times

It is every parent's worst nightmare to learn that their child has cancer.

That nightmare became a reality for Craig and Chantal Vanderkriele in late December 2008, when they learned that their three and a half year old daughter, Alivia was diagnosed with neuroblastoma cancer, stage four.

They spent the majority of their time over the next year and a half at McMaster's Hospital in Hamilton, while she underwent extensive chemotherapy, radiations and surgeries.

In 2009, Alivia underwent three major surgeries, seven cycles of chemotherapy and 60 radiation treatments. She lost her battle with cancer March 19, 2010 at the age of four and a half.

Following the loss of their daughter the Vanderkrieles were motivated to start Alivia's Rainbows, which raises money and supports the families that are going through the same battle.

"There's no govern-

ment funding to help with costs. McMaster in Hamilton is Niagara's children's hospital and not many people know that. You're spending a lot of time traveling, and staying there," said Craig.

"Most parents take time off of work to focus on their children and for some that's a huge financial burden," he said.

The staggering long-term cost of fuel and travel to Hamilton daily, including parking, food, and loss of income can be stressful and a burden to families who cannot afford it.

"We want to help to make that burden less for people, it's a time they should be focusing on their child, not worrying about money," he said.

Because the Vanderkriele's went through it they know what others are experiencing.

"When you hear that your child has cancer you're in shock and not thinking as clearly as you probably should."

They say money being donated to large organizations for cancer research, which Craig said is great, but people were forgetting about the families and children actually living it.

"No one really thinks about that part of it until you're going through it," he said.

Since starting their organization, they have helped 20 families finan-

“

We received so much support from Fort Erie. It came from places we never thought of before like community organizations, churches and a lot of individual people."

— Craig Vanderkriele

cially as well as lending an ear and support.

"We've become close friends with a lot of the people we've helped. It's

not just about giving them money, but also giving them financial advice and lending an ear because we know what it's like," he said.

"We saw major flaws in the system, there was no help for middle to low class families. We were shaking our heads and saying 'this is wrong.'

Craig said there were many factors that motivated them to start this cause, but they wanted to pay it forward.

"We received so much support from Fort Erie. It came from places we never thought of before

like community organizations, churches and a lot of individual people," he said.

"When you lose a child

it is life changing and it inspires you to help because we know what it's like. For the size of this community there's always been tremendous support," he said.

Alivia's Rainbows takes donations all year round, but their main fundraiser of the year is the Toonie Toss.

This year marks the third annual Toonie Toss, which will take place Feb. 23, 6 p.m., at the Fort Erie Leisureplex banquet hall.

Over the last year Alivia's Rainbows has raised over \$50,000 for its

cause, which all went back to support Niagara families who have to make frequent trips to the pediatric oncology ward at McMaster's Children's Hospital.

At least year's event, they raised over \$33,000 with 500 people in attendance and they're hoping for the same results this year.

The tickets for Alivia's Rainbows third annual Toonie Toss are \$20 and can be purchased by e-mailing liviesty@hotmail.com or calling 289-876-8124.

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Want to know more? Visit www.torferie.ca under Town Services, Employment Opportunities. You'll find information about the recruitment process, qualifications, an application form and instructions. The deadline for receiving applications is 5:00 p.m., Friday, March 15, 2013.



Do you have a story idea?

If you have a story idea for the Fort Erie Times, please don't hesitate to contact us and let us know what it's all about.

Editor Kris Dubé can be reached at

kris.dube@summedia.ca, on Facebook or Twitter (@KrisChristopherDube) and by phone at (905) 871-3100 ext. 207.

The Fort Erie Times can also be found on Twitter (@FortErie_Times)

Junior citizen



KRIS DUBÉ Fort Erie Times

Local teenager Alexandra Hancock was recently nominated for a Junior Citizen of the Year Award, through the Ontario Community Newspapers Association.

Havin' a snow ball



Sommers Elich with her Uncle Ghislain Rattie decided to get creative with the snow last Friday and made a colorful snowman.

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OVERNIGHT WINTER PARKING ON STREETS

ATTENTION ALL MOTORISTS: In an effort to keep the streets free of vehicles during the winter months for snowplowing and sanding operations, residents are reminded that no overnight parking is permitted.

Traffic By-law No. 2000-89, Section 205 provides that "No person shall park a vehicle or permit a vehicle to remain parked" on any street in Town "between the hours of 2:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m. from November 1, 2012 and March 31, 2013."

The Town's By-Law Enforcement Officers will be exercising vigilant enforcement of By-law No. 2000-89. **Your vehicle will be issued a parking ticket and could be towed, at your expense,** if found in violation of the by-law.

Enquiries may be directed to the Town's By-Law Enforcement Officers by calling (905) 871-1600, Extension 2216 (Geoff Stephenson) or Extension 2215 (Matt Richardson).

HEY STUDENTS! LOOKING FOR SUMMER WORK?

The Corporation is now accepting applications for **summer student employment opportunities** in parks/cemeteries; facilities; roads; horticulture; museums and engineering. Work schedules may include weekends and holidays. Some positions require a valid, Class G drivers' license. Further details are available at www.town.forterie.ca. Go to "Town Hall", scroll down and click on "Employment Opportunities".

Returning students MUST apply. Application forms are available on-line and at Town Hall. The deadline for receiving applications is **5:00 p.m., FRIDAY MARCH 22, 2013**. The Town of Fort Erie is an equal opportunity employer. Accommodation is available to candidates upon request.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE

HOUSEKEEPING ZONING BY-LAW AMENDMENT FENCE REGULATIONS

The development community and members of the public are invited to attend an Open House regarding the proposed amendment to the Fence Regulations in the Town of Fort Erie on:

Thursday, February 21st, 2013, 5:00 – 6:00 PM
Atrium, Fort Erie Town Hall,
1 Municipal Centre Drive, Fort Erie, Ontario

The Town of Fort Erie has initiated a housekeeping amendment to the Town's Zoning By-law to incorporate provisions for the regulation of fences. By-law 150-08, as amended, currently regulates fences in the Town of Fort Erie. At its meeting of January 14th, 2013, Town Council directed staff to undertake the necessary amendments to the Comprehensive Zoning By-law 129-90 to enable variances to fence regulations to be granted by the Committee of Adjustment. The purpose of this amendment is to incorporate the regulations and provisions of By-law 150-08, as amended, into Comprehensive Zoning By-law 129-90 which would allow the Committee of Adjustment to grant variances to the regulations for fences. The objective is to provide a standardized, fair and defensible process for granting variances to the regulations governing fences in the Town of Fort Erie.

The objective of the informal public meeting is to gather the views and opinions of the public prior to Town Council considering the amendment. A future Public meeting will be held with Council at their meeting of March 4th, 2013. Town staff will be available to address any of your questions, comments, or concerns.

For more information, please contact Matt Kernahan, MCIP, RPP, Senior Development Planner at 905-871-1600 extension 2507 or mkernahan@town.forterie.on.ca

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

FOR THE 2013-2018 MULTI-YEAR ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

The 2013-2018 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan outlines the Town of Fort Erie's strategy to prevent and remove barriers and meet its requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. This plan highlights the achievements of the Town's Accessibility Advisory Committee (A.A.C.) and the steps being put in place to help make Ontario fully accessible by 2025.

In order to obtain public feedback on the Plan, the Town of Fort Erie is hosting two public consultations as well as making the Plan available on the Town's web-site and in hard copy at Town Hall. If you are a person with a disability, a caregiver, a family member, a friend or would just like to participate, please mark your calendar for:

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2013
TIME: 2:00 P.M. TO 4:00 P.M. and 7:00 P.M. TO 9:00 P.M.
LOCATION: TOWN HALL ATRIUM, 1 MUNICIPAL CENTRE DRIVE, FORT ERIE

Transit representatives will also be available and showcase a new accessible bus.

If you require any accommodations in order to attend and participate, please let us know in advance so that arrangements can be made by contacting Bev Bradnam at 905-871-1600 ext. 2201 or by e-mail at: bbradnam@forterie.on.ca

** TAX NOTICE **

TOWN OF FORT ERIE 2013 INTERIM TAXES FOR ALL PROPERTY CLASSES FIRST INSTALLMENT DUE THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2013

For further information regarding payment of taxes,
please refer to the back of your tax bill.

2013 interim tax bills were mailed on February 7, 2013
Office Hours: 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday

Monthly payment plans by pre-authorized bank withdrawal are available for accounts with past due taxes and current year taxes. For information contact: Town of Fort Erie at 905-871-1600 Gillian Corney, Manager of Revenue & Collections

NOTICE TO TOWN OF FORT ERIE WATER CUSTOMERS

As part of a water billing system upgrade, customers will be receiving a new and improved water bill effective with the January 2013 billing. This bill will be mailed on or about February 15, 2013 with a due date of March 5, 2013. The new bill will include additional account and meter reading information such as:

- Payments received since last water bill;
- Adjustment charge details;
- History of previous six meter reads identified as actual or estimate reads; and
- Additional billing definitions on the reverse of the bill.

Please call 905-871-1600 between 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. if you have any questions.

TENDER ISF-01-2013

The Corporation of the Town of Fort Erie is inviting submissions from interested bidders to provide any and all labour, materials and equipment necessary to complete:

BOILER REMOVAL AND REPLACEMENT AT FORT ERIE TOWN HALL
Sealed submission clearly addressed to Carolyn Kett, Town Clerk will be received by the Customer Service UNIT (CSU) at 1 Municipal Centre Drive, Fort Erie ON until 2:00 p.m. local time on:

FEbruary 28, 2013

Specific project details and requirements are provided within the bid documents.

All Town of Fort Erie's formal competitive bid opportunities are posted on the Town's Landing Page HYPERLINK "<http://www.biddingpro.com/tender/www.biddingpro.com/ontario/>". If a hard copy is required, please contact Bart Mennige HYPERLINK "<mailto:bmmenige@forterie.on.ca>" bmenige@forterie.on.ca or at 905-871-1600 ext. 2303, to make suitable arrangements.

The lowest bid does not necessarily mean:

Infrastructure Services Facilities Maintenance

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SERVE YOUR COMMUNITY ON A BOARD OR COMMITTEE

Here is another opportunity to lend your time and talents to your community. The Town of Fort Erie is served not only by elected officials but by volunteers as well through appointment to its various boards and committees.

The Town is looking to attract people who have an interest in contributing to their community. Vacancies currently exist on the following boards and committees:

BUSINESS/ SHOPPING

Bridgeburg Station
Downtown BIA
One (1) Vacancy



BUSINESS/ SHOPPING

Crystal Beach BIA
One (1) Vacancy



FLOWERS/ BEAUTIFICATION

Communities-in-Bloom
Committee
Four (4) Vacancies



CARE AND MAINTAIN

Fort Erie Cemetery
Advisory Committee
One (1) Vacancy



For more information on these boards and committees, please see By-laws establishing each of the boards/committees at the Town's website: www.foterie.on.ca under Town Hall "C" for "Committees."

We look forward to receiving your application by **Wednesday, March 6, 2013 by 4:00 p.m.**
Applications are available:

- On the Town's website www.foterie.on.ca under Public Notices – Board and Committee Vacancies, or from the Clerk's Office.
- Or you can submit a letter setting out relevant background information.

Submissions will be accepted by the Clerk via:

1. Email: ckel@foterie.on.ca
2. Mail: Town of Fort Erie, 1 Municipal Centre Drive, Fort Erie, ON L2A 2S6
3. Hand delivery to the Customer Service Desk, Town Hall
4. Fax: 905-871-4022

Cheryl Watson, Legislative Assistant, welcomes enquiries at 905-871-1600 ext. 2212 or email: cwatson@foterie.on.ca

This information is being collected pursuant to the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and will be used to select persons for appointments to Town of Fort Erie boards and committees. A public open ballot process is used when an election is required to select an appointee. The ballots are public documents.

Carolyn J. Kett, Town Clerk, Town of Fort Erie

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Bouquet to local opinions

This is a bouquet to anyone who speaks out about local issues, in a professional and mature fashion. I would like to refer this bouquet to the author of a letter that was printed in last week's Fort Erie Times, whose opinion I agree with wholeheartedly.

Brick to parking issues

This is a brick to the lack of effort put into addressing parking issues at one specific Town o n - w e n d property. I attended a function there last week and witnessed several senior citizens having to walk a long distance through the snow, to get inside. This needs to be addressed.

Brick to not being careful

This is a brick to a member of council who forgot to turn off his microphone after Monday's council meeting, when the audio on the Town of Fort Erie's website was still running.

Brick to pavilion, bouquet to councillor

This is a brick to those who feel it is necessary

to erect a pavilion at Sugarbowl Park, without addressing the Kinsmen Pool that sits only a short distance away that has not been given the attention it needs by council. Ward 2 Coun. Rick Shular was the only politician who mentioned the pool during this discussion at council and therefore, he deserves a bouquet.

Another bouquet to a councillor

This is a bouquet to Ward 3 Coun. Bob Steckley for his recommendation that council needs to do a better job at acting like a cohesive unit. He has been criticized in the past, but all along a lot of people know he is capable of doing good things for this town. This is one of them.

Brick to frequent stops

This is a brick to the amount of stops made by the school bus I was stuck behind on Monday morning. I know it's not the driver's fault, but the

school board should realize that stops are being made about 50 feet away from one another. Aren't we supposed to be encouraging our youth to be active? Making them walk another 45 seconds won't hurt them.

Send your bricks & bouquets to editorial@foterietimes.com or phone:
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(choice of one per person)

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- Baby Spinach, Sweet Bell Peppers, Bean Sprouts, Wonton Crisps, Chilli Peanuts and Sesame Vinaigrette
- Grilled Romaine with Broken Caesar Vinaigrette

ENTREE

(choice of one)

- Grilled Chicken Supreme with Truffle Scented Mushroom Medley
- Seared Salmon Finished with Citrus Foam
 - Grilled Strip Loin with Brandy Peppercorn Sauce

DESSERT

- Warm Chocolate Cake
- Creme Brûlée
- Coffee and Tea Service

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The proud parents of
Allison Quong
and

Shan Carlson

are thrilled to announce the engagement of their
children. A date will soon be planned.

STAG & DOE

Fort Erie Legion Hall

1640 Gordon Rd., Fort Erie

March 8th, 2013

Coming Events

Coming Events

Trivia Night:

starting at 7:00pm at Fort Erie Legion, Feb. 22nd. Cost \$15 per table or a piece of \$10 for \$100. Price includes admission, 1 party tray per table

Prizes to be awarded.
Fund Raiser for Accessibility.

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Classifieds

LIDDON, Ron "Tiny" - Suddenly at his residence in Crystal Beach on Thursday, February 7th, 2013 age 57 years. Best friend of Mari Anne Biggins-Lader Brother of Cindy (Dove) Legros of Winnipeg, Brian (Lorraine) Weston, Roger (Inez) Hargrave and David (Evelyn) Vermillion. Also survived by several nieces and nephews. Predeceased by his parents George and Mae (George) Liddon. Family and friends will gather for a Celebration of Tiny's Life at the William St. Funeral Home, 720 Ridge Road North, Ridgeway, Tuesday, February 12th at 2:00 p.m., visitation beginning at 1:00 p.m. Donations to the Canadian Diabetes Association would be appreciated by the family. On-line condolences at williamstfuneralhome.ca

PHILLIPS, Robert - Passed away in his home on February 10 2013 at the age of 73. He is survived by his wife Renée and loving daughter, Kelly, Katie, and Jason, as well as many grandchildren. A celebration of life will take place in the coming weeks. If desired memorial donations can be made to any Royal Canadian Legion. Arrangements entrusted to NIAGARA FUNERAL ALTERNATIVES 905-894-0120.



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YOUNG, Marion - Peacefully at Douglas Memorial Hospital, Fort Erie on Tuesday, February 5, 2013 in her 79th year. Beloved wife for 59 years of Patrick Young. Dear mother of Patt (Rick) Kenworthy, David (Deanne) Young and Daniel (Danielle) Young. Adored grandmother of Matt (Mandy), Jason (Ashley), Kevin (Liza), Jeff (Judy), Trevor, Thomas and Katie and 5 great-grandchildren. Also survived by her brother Marvin Dickson and sisters-in-law Sharron and Bernice Young. Marion will be greatly missed by her special family friend, Roger Lazak, her extended family in Leamington and Smithville who were always a big part of her family and many special nieces and nephews in the Fort Erie area. A special thank you to the Fort Erie and the very special nurses at Douglas Memorial Hospital. Funeral arrangements entrusted to **WILLIAMS FUNERAL HOME**, Ridgeway. Memorial donations to Douglas Memorial, 1st Floor would be appreciated by the family. On-line condolences to www.williamsfuneralhome.ca



Mark Bogala

In memory of a son, father, and brother, who passed away Feb. 18th, 2011. Lovingly remembered by Mom & Dad, Danielle & Nichole and Marie.



RIEGLE

In loving memory of our dear son, Christopher, who left us on December 12, 1981.

The heartaches in this world are greatest of any. When we are gone it's hard to hear him say, "Hi Mom, Hi Dad! It's been so long." To hear his voice and see him smile. To touch his face and feel his warmth. Each time we look at your picture, Christopher, You seem to smile and say, "Don't worry, I'll be back again someday. We'll all be together again someday."

Lovingly remembered always by Mom & Dad.



Personal

I am proud to call
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When families place their trust with me,
I do absolutely everything
I can to assist them.

Facilitating their needs and ensuring that the services they have selected are handled in a personal and professional manner are vital.

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Darren Flagg

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honOUR





Fort Erie native Alex Drulia was recently named the Midwest Junior Hockey League's player of the week.

Drulia named player of the week in Midwest League

Kris Dubé
Editor

Alex Drulia grew up in the local minor hockey system and now he's making his name for himself in the Midwest Junior Hockey League (MJJHL).

Recently, the 17-year-old Fort Erie native was named player of the week in the league, that is halfway through its first season of existence.

Playing for the Soo Firehawks in Sault Ste. Marie, Drulia has 23 goals and 24 assists in 36 games played, for a total of 47 points.

Earlier in the season, Drulia was nominated for the player of the week accolade but came up short to another opponent.

For the week ending Jan.

27, the forward was named the most valuable player out

of all 10 teams.

"I was pretty excited," he said.

It's also a team effort and he wouldn't have been able to do it on his own.

"Plus, my linemates have been helping me out a lot."

He also said getting a considerable amount of ice-time gives him the opportunity to produce offensively for this team, who is second in the standings.

Before the MWJHL and its 10 teams were established, Drulia spent last season with the Bradford Rattlers in the Greater Metro Junior

Hockey League.
Staying healthy has been a factor for Drulla this season, considering he missed over three weeks with his former team due to a concussion.

Drulia says the City of Sault Ste. Marie is a place where many of its residents live and breathe hockey,

therefore a lot of excitement has been attached to his team and the new league.

"Everywhere we go in town, we get recognized," he said.

Since he is only 17, Drulia says he still has plenty of gas left in the tank and hopes to continue with an on-ice career for as long as possible and plans to eventually play for a U.S. college.

A luxury that most young hockey players don't have, is an uncle who played in the National Hockey League.

Alex's uncle is Stan Drulia, who played three seasons with the Tampa Bay Lightning. He is currently an assistant coach with the American Hockey League's Milwaukee Admirals, a farm team for the Nashville Predators.

"He's definitely helped me out, I talk to him at least three times a week."



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